
Title: The Aaron Chronicles

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OF THE FINDING OF THE RING

As is told in the epic tales, Aaron set out one day with a band of demented dwarves and a discredited Rosicrucian named Goodgulf to separate a dragon from his hoard of short-term municipals and convertible debentures. The quest was successful, and the dragon, a prewar basilisk who smelled like a bus, was taken from behind while he was clipping coupons. And yet, though many pointless and annoying deeds were done, this adventure would concern us a good deal less than it does, if that is possible, except for a bit of petty larceny Aaron did along the way to keep his hand in.

The party was ambushed in the Mealy Mountains by a roving band of narcs, and in hurrying to the aid of the embattled dwarves, Aaron lost his sense of direction and ended up in a cave a considerable distance away. Finding himself at the mouth of a tunnel which led rather perceptibly down, Aaron suffered a temporary recurrence of an old inner-ear problem and went rushing along it to the rescue, as he thought, of his friends. After running for some

time and finding nothing
but more tunnel, he was
beginning to feel he had
taken a wrong turn
somewhere when the
passage abruptly ended in
a large cavern.

When Aaron's eyes
became adjusted to the
pale light, he found that
the grotto was almost
filled by a wide,
kidney-shaped lake where
a nasty-looking clown
named Goddam paddled
noisily on an old rubber
sea horse. He ate raw
fish and occasional side
orders to travel from
the outside world in the
form of lost travelers
like Aaron, and he
greeted Aaron's
unexpected entrance into
his underground sauna in
much the same way as he
would the sudden arrival
of a Domino's Pizza
delivery. But Goddam
preferred the subtle
approach in assaulting
creatures over a foot
high and weighing more
than 10 pounds, and
consequently he challenged
Aaron to a riddle game
to gain time. Aaron, who
had a sudden attack of
amnesia regarding the
fact that the dwarves
were being made into
chutney outside the cave,
accepted.

They asked each other
questions, such as who
played Captain Kirk and
what was Krypton. In the
end, Aaron won the game.
Stumped at last for a
riddle to ask, he cried
out, as his hand fell on
his snub-nosed .38, "What
have I got in my pocket?"
This Goddam failed to
answer, and growing
impatient, he paddled up
to Aaron, whining, "Let

me see, let me see."

Aaron obliged by pulling out the pistol and emptying it in Goddam's direction. The dark spoiled his aim, and he managed only to deflate the rubber float, leaving Goddam to flounder. Goddam, who couldn't swim, reached out his hand to Aaron and begged him to pull him out, and as he did, Aaron noticed an interesting-looking ring on his finger and pulled it off.

He would have finished Goddam off then and there, but pity stayed his hand. "It's a pity I've run out of bullets," he thought, as he went back up the tunnel, pursued by Goddam's cries of rage.

COMING NEXT... Goodgulf, with the aid of one of his secret potions (probably sodium pentothal) manages to drag the truth about the Ring out of Aaron.